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WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

August 4, 2004

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Mr. Michael Garcia
Assistant Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
425 I Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Mr. Garcia

I am writing today because I have serious concerns with reports that your office has been engaging in enforcement activities that are unfairly targeting Latinos in my home state of Washington. In recent weeks, my staff has received numerous reports from members of the Latino community raising concerns that your office has resorted to a vigorous and "racially targeted" approach to detaining and removing undocumented immigrants. I am writing to request that you respond to these allegations by clarifying how your office approaches immigration enforcement in general, and by clarifying whether or not your office has recently employed any enforcement activities that target Latinos in Washington State.

According to reports to my staff, aggressive detention and removal activities against Latinos reportedly began during the last week of June 2004 and the first week of July 2004. While most of the reports were not first - hand accounts, some Immigration and Customs Enforcement activities reported include:

- 200 Latinos apprehended in Quincy;
- 88 Latinos apprehended in Royal City;
- Roadblocks established along Highway 24, where a large population of Latinos are known to reside;

A report in the Latino newspaper, "El Mundo," of Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials entering a Latino apartment complex in Lacey at 4:00 a.m. on June 30, 2004, whereby they began to question and detain individuals;

- Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials forcing a group of English as a Second Language students in Lacey to sign voluntary departure forms; and
- At least one report of a Latino who was detained for several hours and later released when his immigration status was confirmed.

PLEASE REPLY TO:

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The net result of these reports is widespread confusion and a profound sense of fear and distrust among the Latino community. Due to the activities, there has been a tremendous impact detrimental to our Latino community, the agricultural sector of my state's economy, and to businesses in the local communities in general. Further, it is my understanding that many Latino families are afraid to leave their homes, that children are being kept home from day care, and that many Latinos are not reporting to work.]

On July 9, 2004, one of my staff members spoke with George Morones, who at the time still maintained the position of Acting Director of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement for Washington State. Mr. Morones indicated that there were no unusual immigration enforcement activities being employed in the state of Washington, nor were there an unusual number of arrests or detentions being made in late June or early July of 2004.

He did note, however, that Immigration and Customs Enforcement had dispatched a "National Fugitive Operations Program" to Eastern Washington for the first time. The team had been dispatched to detain four undocumented immigrants who already had felony warrants for their arrest. He also noted that all four individuals had been detained during the last week of June 2004.

I appreciate the importance of enforcing our immigration laws and protecting the safety of my constituents. I am opposed, however, to any enforcement procedures that are racially motivated or discriminatory in nature.

Given the detrimental impact the reports of these activities have had on the Latino community in Washington state, and Eastern Washington in particular, I believe that it is critical that your office be given the opportunity to clarify your procedures and clarify the facts. I am interested in protecting the public from experiencing continued and unnecessary fear and panic. With your assistance, my office and leaders in the Latino community may be better positioned to actively respond to and prevent misperceptions of your offices enforcement procedures.

As such, I am respectfully requesting that your office clarify the nature of your recent enforcement activities in Washington State. Please indicate, in writing:

- The number of detainees apprehended on a weekly basis in all of Washington State in 2003 and 2004;
- The percentage of Latinos among the aggregate number of detainees in each, 2003 and 2004;
- The number of deportations that occurred on a weekly basis in Washington state in 2003 and 2004; and
- The percentage of Latinos among the aggregate number of deportees in each; 2003 and 2004.

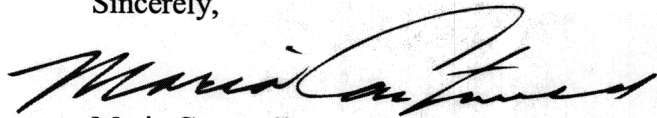
Please also describe the nature and character of these law enforcement activities that took place in the state during the previously identified time frame. This accounting should include:

- What investigative tactics were used;
- The differences in tactics used before and after implementing the "National Fugitive Operation Program" in Washington state;
- Who executed on the enforcement activities (federal, state, or local officers); and
- How many people were detained or arrested on each occasion, and for what length of time.

Finally, please indicate the criteria by which Immigration and Customs Enforcement has identified and targeted 300,000 individuals nationwide for imminent deportation. Please specify the types and class of crimes these individuals have committed in order to warrant targeted immigration enforcement.

Thank you for your office's responsiveness on this issue to date. I appreciate your time and prompt attention to this important manner, and I look forward to receiving your written response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Cantwell", written in a cursive style.

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

MC:ca